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ABSTRACT

This paper asks whether there is a relationship between reading, writing, and spelling, whether these subjects should be taught together or separately. A review of the literature found that many theorists saw a strong relationship between just reading and writing, while others believed spelling belonged with these. The consensus of researchers was that taught together, reading, writing, and spelling serve to help students to integrate information. (NKA)

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The Relationship Between Reading, Writing, and Spelling

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CS 217 330

INTRODUCTION:

I have been working in a 4th grade classroom now for 6 weeks. In my observations and during the time I work with the students, many questions come to mind.

One child in particular caught my attention because she has been the source of many questions. Here is a child with many talents and presents herself as very intelligent; however this is not really the case. In reality her skills are rather weak. When I work with her on reading, writing, and spelling, I notice contradictions in her ability. She can read anything you put in front of her and reads it beautifully, but cannot construct a story, putting her ideas into words on the page. Also, she has problems with spelling accurately. I started to pay closer attention to these three subject areas with other students as well and noticed several things. Some of the students who read proficiently can also write and spell really well, while other students read and write well, but cannot spell. I started to wonder whether or not reading, writing, and spelling were related in any way, and if so how do they affect a child's academic abilities.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

Is there a relationship between reading, writing, and spelling and how a child develops academically? Should these subjects be taught together or separately?

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Through my research I found that many theorists had similar points of view on the topic of reading, writing, and spelling relationships. Many researchers saw a strong relationship between just reading and writing while others believed spelling belonged in that category as well. Braunger and Lewis discussed the importance of reading and writing. I found that "research shows that writing leads to improved reading achievement, reading leads to better writing performance and combined instruction leads to a higher level of thinking than when either process is taught alone." (Braunger & Lewis, 1997) Cobine felt that reading and writing exist only in relationship to each other. Reading and writing are considered a communicative pair where in order to comprehend and communicate successfully we must be efficient in both areas. "If ability in half of the communication pairs languishes, so does ability in the other half." (Cobine, 1995) Cobine believes that in the traditional style of teaching a child to read, writing usually plays a minor role. He concluded that this style of teaching is typically ineffective. Writing should be used as a response to reading. Reading and writing taught together would fulfill all different styles of learning in the way that students can learn to organize,clarify and refine their thoughts by writing while reading. (Cobine,

1995) Along with Cobine's beliefs, Smith (1998) felt that one learns to write by reading. If writing is to achieve any type of successful communication then reading must complement it. (Smith, 1998) According to DeFord (1986), "The process of reading and writing are closely linked and interdependent, neither can develop in isolation from the other and none can develop before the other."

Some researchers believe that spelling needs to be included with reading and writing as a joint learning style. Separate from writing, spelling serves no purpose. Spelling develops more effectively when linked to reading and writing. (Bean & Bouffler, 1991) Others agreed with Bean and Bouffler. When students are learning new spelling words the words should be taken from their readings and writings. (Gentry and Gillet, 1993) Along these same lines, Wilde (1990) shares many of the same ideas and opinions. He feels that spelling is important, but there should only be time allotted for it through authentic reading and writing. Children grow as spellers when teachers support them in reading and writing. (Wilde, 1990) One last piece of information that I gathered was from Robin Gilchrist who believes that, "Increasing children's awareness of spelling patterns hastens their progress in both reading and writing." (Gilchrist)

SUMMARY:

I have come to find out that the majority of people researching the issue of the connections between reading, writing, and spelling share similar views. When teaching reading, writing, and spelling it is best for you, as the teacher, to highly consider integrating these subject areas into your lesson. The major consensus was that taught together, reading, writing, and spelling, serve to help students integrate information as opposed to learning each subject individually. It is important to recognize that these subjects are related to one another and actually help the student understand what is being taught. For example, if children are having a hard time with writing, it might be a good idea to incorporate more reading into their daily routine to provide more exposure to the written language. From the research is clear that combining teaching of these three subjects will have a positive influence on students' academic success

IMPLICATIONS:

Having the experience of working in a classroom setting every day over the past 6 weeks has sparked my curiosity about how a teacher actually goes about structuring her teaching style. I became interested in this issue in particular because I was noticing conflicting views around the three subjects of reading, writing and spelling. I feel

that now I have gained a much better understanding of how to approach this issue in the future when I have my own classroom. In teaching I will combine these subjects together as one. I will try not to focus on these subjects as individual subjects, but as one relevant topic. I feel that it is in the best interest of students to structure my teaching style in a way that helps students make connections in reading, writing, and spelling. I want to stress to other teachers that these subjects go hand in hand and need to be supported by each other. Now that I have gained this knowledge I hope to go back to my classroom and work with the student I mentioned in my introduction and give her better guidance so that she will feel much more successful when presented with lessons pertaining to these three subjects.

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